

GOTHIC ORNAMENTS
FROM THE CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF YORK.*

FIG. 11 and FIG. 12 represent two bosses, or knots, in the ceiling of the choir-end of the church. Including the transept, near the altar, there are in the ribs, or groins, 299 bosses, from two feet to two feet six inches in length. Those in the centre are 99 feet from the floor, and are all cut in oak, excepting those over the crowns of the windows, which are cut in stone. The foliage of all was originally gilded, and the figures and heads were painted in colours. The principal ribs (of which the section is shown in the engraving), project 13 inches, and are 10½ inches broad. The smaller ribs project 11 inches, and are 7 inches in breadth.

FIG. 13 is the external cornice over the windows in the aisles of the choir. It is 2 feet deep, and projects 1 foot 2 inches. It is right to mention that the whole of our illustrations of these details were engraved by Mr. Hart.

YORK MINSTER;
ITS FIRES AND RESTORATIONS.†

— BY JAMES WYLLSON.

AT the meeting in March, 1842, at which the reports were read, whereof our previous article contains the substance, the Rev. William Vernon Harcourt, senior canon residentiary, in his address stated, with reference to the provision against fire, that there was an insurance of 10,000*l.* on the choir, and 2,000*l.* on the organ; but the Dean and Chapter hoped that, "if the above plan for the easy extinction of fire, or any plan similar to it, could be carried into execution, the insurance might be augmented on terms more advantageous;" he also stated that there was another risk to which the Chapter had directed their attention, namely, the chance of the fabric being fired by lightning; the rev. gentleman said the Minster had been once so endangered, but the fire was speedily extinguished; he attributed the escape of our Cathedral to circumstances connected with their roofs, and thought "the paying proper attention to the connection of the metallic coverings with the iron and lead water-pipes leading to the drains as forming one great conductor of the electric fluid, a point of much importance to their preservation from such accidents." In reference to the Minster funds, he stated that they now differed from what they were after borrowing the 8,000*l.* on account of the fire of 1829, "exactly by the additional burden of the annuities on which that sum was borrowed, and the addition of 1,000*l.* to a debt of 6,000*l.* under which they then laboured;" he then recapitulated the sums required as estimated by Mr. Smirke, and which shewed that to meet the completion of the restoration in nave, the urgent and non-urgent repairs, and the 7,000*l.* debt referred to, about 36,000*l.* must be provided; or if the whole restoration recommended by Mr. Smirke were entertained, the deficit would be 45,500*l.*; such being the case, it was necessary, in the first place, that the Dean and Chapter should mortgage the fabric funds, the clear surplus of which (after allowing 1,500*l.* for burthens independent of repairs, and for maintenance of service, and as reduced by the annuities above-mentioned) being 790*l.* would allow of borrowing 12,000*l.* from Queen Anne's bounty, at 4 per cent. to be paid off, interest and principal, in 40 years. To enable them to carry this into effect, the Dean and Chapter had applied for an Act of Parliament: in the second place, a portion of certain leasehold property, called the *common estates*, the fines and other proceeds from which are (by royal statute and parliamentary authority) divided between the fabric and the residentiary body—the former taking one, and the latter five-sixths, it was proposed by the latter to surrender in favour of the repairs; and the sale of one of which, if authorized by Parliament, would realise 15,500*l.*; this sum, it was intended, the fabric should have to pay no interest for, but the principal to be repaid by instalments in forty years; thus, the succeeding residentiaries would enjoy a gradually increasing return, until ultimately its entire value would be restored to them, while the present body may be considered as relinquishing all their

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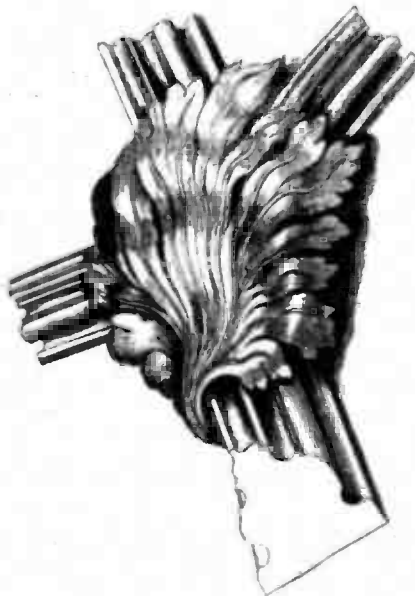


Fig. 11.



Fig. 12.



Fig. 13.

future interest in it, and which is worth, say 87*l.* per annum, individually.

The mode of appropriation which the Dean and Chapter had in view in regard to the 27,500*l.* thus to be raised, was, first, to devote 1,000*l.* to the augmentation of the small vicarage connected with the property to be sold; which done, and the parliamentary fees and other expenses defrayed, between 23,000*l.* and 26,000*l.* would remain for the uses of the fabric: from this, then, the 7,000*l.* debt above referred to was to be paid; 6,200*l.* set apart for the first class of repairs; 7,000*l.* towards the second class; and the remaining 4,000*l.* to 5,000*l.* placed at the disposal of the Restoration Committee for the especial purpose of reconstructing the groined ceiling of nave. Mr. Harcourt stated that he was authorized by three non-residentiary canons to put down their names for 50*l.* each towards the restoration, and that the ecclesiastical commissioners, who had in their hands about one-third of the property of the original body of the Canons of York, had agreed to contribute 500*l.* to the same object. In conclusion he stated that there would still be a deficit of 12,000*l.* one-half to complete the restoration of the nave, the other to accomplish the necessary repairs: he also stated that it was the desire of the Dean and Chapter that the restoration committee "would carry out and complete the work they had so admirably begun," and complimented that body and Mr. Smirke by saying "that the works had been carried on with a skill and an economy which deserved not only to be commended, but to be followed as an example."

At the meeting in October, 1842, the chairman of the restoration committee (the Rev. Stephen Greyke, one of his grace the Archbishop's domestic chaplains) reported the progress which had been made in the interval since the meeting in spring, the works during which, he stated, "were unfortunately carried on upon the most restricted scale, all that the committee had it in their power to do, in consequence of the exhausted state of the funds at their disposal, being to avoid a total suspension of their operations." The glazing of the four windows of the tower which were in progress in March, as also of the westmost window of south aisle, had been completed—the great tenor bell had been raised and securely suspended—the clock, with all requisite appendages, and a substantial and convenient case, had been erected in the clock chamber, and set in motion. The arches of the nave which support the tower, and which on minute examination were found to be far more dangerously damaged than was anticipated, had been thoroughly and effectually repaired; the pillars on the south side of nave had been also repaired, every stone damaged by the fire being cut out, and accurately replaced by new ones carefully bonded in; those on north side were undergoing a similar renovation. Two contracts had also been entered into, one for the ribs and spandrels forming the vaulting of the nave, the other for the carved work to the same, the latter consisting of upwards of 150 bosses, which were all to be executed in strict resemblance of the originals, as fortunately preserved in Halspenny's work, and in drawings by Mr. Brown, a York artist of the present

* See page 165 *ante*.

† Continued from page 159.